

DAILY BULLETIN

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RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT AFFIRMS U.S. SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Powell submits 2004 International Religious Freedom Report

The release of the U.S. Department of State's sixth annual International Religious Freedom report "signifies America's support for all who yearn to follow their conscience without persecution," says U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell.

Announcing the release of the report in Washington September 15, Powell said, "We reaffirm that government exists to protect human rights, not to restrict them; and we stand in solidarity with people everywhere who wish to worship without coercion."

The report documents the conditions of religious freedom around the world country-by-country, outlining barriers to and improvements in religious freedom. The report also designates certain nations as "countries of particular concern" (CPC) for severe violations of religious freedom. Five countries that had been designated CPCs in 2003 -- Burma, China, Iran, North Korea and Sudan -- have been re-designated as CPCs, with the addition of Eritrea, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam this year.

Powell also commended countries such as Turkey and Georgia who "have adopted good practices or have taken steps to promote greater tolerance for all religious faiths."

The full text of the 2004 International Religious Freedom Report can be found at:

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2004/>

Following is the text of Secretary Powell's remarks:
September 15, 2004
On-The-Record Briefing

Remarks by Secretary of State Colin Powell at the Rollout of the Report on the Release of the 2004 Annual Report on International Religious Freedom

SECRETARY POWELL: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Today I submitted to Congress the Department of State's sixth annual Report on International Religious Freedom. Ambassador Hanford and his team have done an outstanding job preparing his report, and it is now available on the Department's website, www.state.gov.

America's commitment to religious liberty is older than our nation itself. The men and women who journeyed to this new world believed that one's conscience was sacred ground upon which government cannot tread.

Those courageous settlers cherished religious freedom as one of many inalienable rights inherent in human nature itself, one of those rights that formed the moral foundation of all just political orders.

As President Bush has said, religious liberty is the first freedom of the human soul. America stands for that freedom in our own country, and we speak for that freedom throughout the world.

With the release of today's report, we reaffirm the universal spirit of our nation's founding. We reaffirm that government exists to protect human rights, not to restrict them; and we stand in solidarity with people everywhere who wish to worship without coercion.

Country by country, this report documents the conditions of religious freedom around the world. We are always eager to commend nations that have made progress over the past year, and the report's Executive Summary acknowledges countries, such as Georgia and Turkey, that have adopted good practices or have taken steps to promote greater tolerance for all religious faiths.

But the report also makes clear that too many people in our world are still denied their basic human right of religious liberty. Some suffer under totalitarian regimes,

others under governments that deliberately target or fail to protect religious minorities from discrimination and violence. By shining a light on this issue, this report signifies America's support for all who yearn to follow their conscience without persecution.

The report also identifies what we refer to as Countries of Particular Concern, governments that engage in or tolerate gross infringements of religious freedom. Our decisions are based on a careful assessment of the facts and represent a fundamental standard of human dignity that all nations should uphold.

Today we are re-designating five countries that, in our judgment, continue to violate their citizens' religious liberty: Burma, China, Iran, North Korea and Sudan. We are also adding three additional countries to this list: Eritrea, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam.

Let me emphasize that we will continue engaging the Countries of Particular Concern with whom we have bilateral relationships. Our existing partnerships have flourished in numerous capacities and they are just one of the best ways for us to encourage our friends to adopt tolerant practices.

The release of today's report underlines our nation's commitment to the protection of religious liberty. This solemn duty has always defined the American character and will forever shape our purpose in the world. Defending the sacred ground of human conscience is a natural commandment to all mankind, and America will always heed this call.

I would now like to introduce Ambassador Hanford, who will take you through the report and answer any questions that you might have. Thank you.

U.S. EXPLAINS VISION, PRIORITIES FOR THE UNITED NATIONS

U.N. should be place where world works for freedom, democracy, prosperity

The following is one of a series of seven fact sheets describing U.S. goals at the 59th session of the United Nations General Assembly:

U.S. Department Of State
Bureau of Public Affairs

U.S. PARTICIPATION IN THE UNITED NATIONS: OUR VISION AND PRIORITIES

“The founding documents of the United Nations and the founding documents of America stand in the same tradition. Both assert that human beings should never be reduced to objects of power or commerce, because their dignity is inherent. Both recognize a moral law that stands above men and nations, which must be defended and enforced by men and nations. And both point the way to peace, the peace that comes when all are free.”

-- President George W. Bush, September 23, 2003

The U.S. Vision for the U.N.

The United Nations should be a forum where diverse countries and cultures of the world work together for freedom, democracy, peace, human rights, and prosperity for all people.

The United States adheres to three guiding principles for engagement with the United Nations:

-- The U.N. should live up to the vision of its founders to make the world more secure, democratic, and prosperous.

-- Effective multilateralism is guided by principled and consistent leadership with the engagement of all U.N. partners.

-- The U.N.'s vast resources must be managed carefully and effectively.

U.S. Priorities

-- Preserve peace and strengthen security, through peace-keeping, counter-terrorism, and counter-proliferation efforts.

-- Help those in need, by rallying the world to increased action on famine, refugee relief, and pressing health issues.

-- Promote human rights and fundamental freedoms.

-- Foster democratic governance and economic opportunity.

-- Advance good stewardship of the U.N.'s resources through better management and budget discipline.

U.S. Initiatives for the 2004 U.N. General Assembly

-- Advancing Economic Freedom: The U.S. will promote open markets and democratic governance in developing countries as a route to freedom and prosperity. The U.N. and its members should promote an environment of good governance and economic freedom, including policies that support private entrepreneurship.

-- Ending Child Sex Tourism: The U.S. seeks to strengthen collaboration to combat trafficking in persons, particularly to end child sex tourism. This modern-day slave trade must be stopped.

-- Promoting Democracy: The U.S. remains committed to increasing cooperation among democratic countries in the U.N., and supports the efforts of a Democracy Caucus to advance such cooperation on resolutions that advance international human rights standards and democratic principles.

-- Banning Human Cloning: The U.S. will co-sponsor a resolution calling for an international convention against human cloning. Human cloning, for any purpose, is unethical, morally reproachable, and an affront to human dignity.

-- Furthering the Roadmap to Middle East Peace: The U.S. continues to encourage Israel and the Palestinian Authority to take concrete steps toward the implementation of the Roadmap to Peace. The U.S. seeks to bring balance to Middle East resolutions to better support the peace process and implementation of the Roadmap.

U.S. LARGEST FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTOR TO UNITED NATIONS

U.S. contributions to the U.N. in 2003 exceeded \$3 billion

U.S. PARTICIPATION IN THE UNITED NATIONS FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

U.S. Engagement in the United Nations

The United Nations provides the United States with an international forum where we can enhance national security, advance foreign policy objectives, and promote American values. The United States seeks to uphold the U.N.'s founding principles. We share a commitment to foster international peace and security; to fight poverty through development; to eradicate pandemic diseases; and to advance freedom, human rights, and democracy.

U.S. leadership in the U.N. is critical to making the world more secure, more democratic, and more prosperous. At the same time, the United States is committed to ensuring good stewardship of U.N. resources so these universal goals are met effectively and efficiently.

U.S. Financial Contributions to the United Nations

The United States is the largest financial contributor to the U.N., and has been every year since its creation in 1945. U.S. contributions to the U.N. system in 2003 were well over \$3 billion. In-kind contributions include items such as food donations for the World Food Program.

The U.S.-assessed contribution to the U.N. regular budget in 2003 was \$341 million, and to U.N. specialized agencies was over \$400 million. The United States also contributed \$686 million in assessments to the peacekeeping budget; \$57 million for the support of the international war crimes tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia; and, \$6 million for preparatory work relating to the Capital Master Plan to renovate the U.N. Headquarters in New York. Moreover, each year the United States provides a significant amount in voluntary contributions to the U.N. and its affiliated agencies and activities, largely for humanitarian and development programs.

Benefits to Americans

The United States benefits from membership in the U.N. and other international organizations by being part of a

multilateral approach to address a wide range of serious global issues. Through the U.N., the United States can build coalitions and pursue multilateral programs that advance U.S. and international interests. U.S. priorities include: countering global terrorism; preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; encouraging nuclear safeguards, arms control, and disarmament; promoting peace in the Middle East and an end to anguish in other regions such as Africa; promoting economic growth; treating those with HIV/AIDS and preventing new HIV infections; and, bringing an end to trafficking in persons. The United Nations provides the forum for the U.S. to address these and other key objectives.

The United States is a generous supporter -- in many cases the largest supporter -- of key U.N. programs. In 2003, the U.S. contributed:

- 57 percent to the budget of the World Food Program to help feed 104 million people in 81 countries;

- 17 percent to the budget of the United Nations Children's Fund to feed, vaccinate, educate, and protect children in 158 countries;

- 14 percent to the core budget of the United Nations Development Program to eradicate poverty and encourage democratic governance; and

- 33 percent to the budget of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

ADVANCING ECONOMIC FREEDOM A U.S. PRIORITY AT U.N.

U.S. advocates formula for economic growth and development

TO ADVANCE ECONOMIC FREEDOM

"Freedom honors and unleashes human creativity -- and creativity determines the strength and wealth of nations."

-- President George W. Bush, November 6, 2003

Formula for Economic Growth and Development

Bringing developing countries into an expanding circle of freedom and prosperity through open markets and democratic governance is a central objective of U.S. foreign policy. In 2002, world leaders came to a balanced consensus on the requirements for development at the Financing for Development conference in Monterrey, Mexico. They agreed that the formula for economic growth and development includes national responsibility, good governance, trade liberalization, and mobilizing resources from within and abroad.

The Right Environment for Growth

Too often, debates in the United Nations focus heavily on foreign aid as the solution to development. However, foreign aid needs a proper enabling environment to support sustained growth. The U.S. has increased development assistance by 50 percent in the past four years, and is finding ways to foster an enabling environment for growth. For example, the U.S. has taken a leading role in liberalizing trade in the World Trade Organization and in numerous bilateral agreements. The U.S. Millennium Challenge Account is President Bush's initiative to support those countries that rule justly, invest in their people, and encourage economic freedom. If fully funded, it would represent the largest increase in U.S. assistance since the Marshall Plan. Where countries demonstrate the will to reduce corruption, invest in their people, and enable entrepreneurial activity, foreign aid can help.

U.N. Efforts

The 2004 report of the U.N. Commission on the Private Sector and Development, co-chaired by Paul Martin and Ernesto Zedillo, highlighted private entrepreneurs as essential agents of economic development, a view endorsed by G8 leaders meeting in Sea Island, Georgia, in 2004. Private sector initiatives should be mainstreamed throughout the U.N. system, and the U.N. should give more attention to what countries can do domestically to promote economic growth. U.N. initiatives must emphasize the importance of good governance, rule of law, private resource flows, the elimination of corruption, property rights, and regulatory policies that build market confidence.

Key Millennium Challenge Account [MCA] Principles

-- Reduce Poverty through Economic Growth: The U.S. focuses its efforts specifically on promoting sustainable

economic growth that reduces poverty through investments in areas such as agriculture, education, private sector development, and capacity building.

-- Reward Good Policy: Using objective indicators, countries are selected to receive assistance based on their performance in governing justly, investing their citizens, and encouraging economic freedom.

-- Operate in Partnership: Countries that receive MCA assistance will be responsible for identifying the greatest barriers to their own development, ensuring civil society participation, and developing an MCA program. Each MCA country will enter into a public Compact that includes a multi-year plan for achieving shared development objectives and that identifies the responsibilities of each partner in achieving those objectives.

-- Focus on Results: MCA assistance will go to those countries that have developed well-designed programs with clear objectives, benchmarks to measure progress, procedures to ensure fiscal accountability for the use of MCA assistance, and a plan for effective monitoring and objective evaluation of results.

U.S. PLANS TO ADVANCE ROADMAP TO MIDDLE EAST PEACE

This is a U.S. priority at the United Nations General Assembly

TO FURTHER THE ROADMAP TO PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

"America will work without tiring to achieve two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in security and prosperity and in peace."

-- President George W. Bush, May 9, 2003

The United States continues to actively pursue President Bush's goal of Israel and Palestine living together in peace and security. To this end, the U.S. is working to achieve the goals of the Roadmap, which is a performance-based approach to a permanent two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The 58th U.N. General Assembly adopted 21 resolutions concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Many of those resolutions implied that only Israel has obligations and responsibilities to make peace. They failed to address both sides of the larger security context of the Middle East, including devastating suicide attacks against Israel. One-sided resolutions only serve to undermine the ability of the United Nations to play a constructive role in promoting peace. We believe all resolutions on Israeli-Palestinian peace should reflect the balance of mutual responsibilities embodied by the Roadmap.

The Roadmap, endorsed in the Security Council Resolution 1515, outlines the obligations and responsibilities of both parties to achieve peace and security. To facilitate that solution, the United States seeks to bring balance to the number and content of Middle East resolutions in the General Assembly.

As in previous years, the U.S. will encourage the General Assembly to reduce the overall number of Middle East resolutions introduced. The U.S. also hopes the General Assembly will adopt a resolution condemning anti-Semitism and make more references to anti-Semitism in pertinent resolutions. The U.S. will continue to advocate for the abolition of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices and other bodies that are biased against Israel.

The international community has long recognized that resolution of this conflict must come through negotiated settlement. The United States seeks to bring balance to Middle East resolutions to better support the peace process and the implementation of the Roadmap.

Highlights of the Roadmap

-- The goal is the comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

-- Phase I of the Roadmap includes ending terror and violence, normalizing Palestinian life, and building Palestinian institutions. Palestinians and Israelis resume security cooperation, and Palestinians undertake comprehensive political reform in preparation for statehood, including drafting a Palestinian constitution, and holding free, fair, and open elections.

-- In Phase II, efforts are focused on the option of creating an independent Palestinian state with provisional borders and attributes of sovereignty, based on the new constitution.

-- Phase III results in a permanent status agreement and the end of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Comprehensive settlement will result in the emergence of an independent, democratic, and viable Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbors.

U.S. PLANS EFFORT AT U.N. TO END CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING

This is a U.S. priority at the 59th U.N. General Assembly

TO END CHILD SEX TOURISM: FIGHTING TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

“We must show new energy in fighting back an old evil. Nearly two centuries after the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and more than a century after slavery was officially ended in its last strongholds, the trade in human beings for any purpose must not be allowed to thrive in our time.”

-- President George W. Bush, September 23, 2003

Trafficking in persons is modern-day slavery, involving victims who are forced, defrauded, or coerced into labor or sexual exploitation. Annually, an estimated 600,000 to 800,000 people -- mostly children and women -- are trafficked across national borders. The United States seeks to strengthen collaboration with countries to combat trafficking in persons, particularly to end child sex tourism.

Child sex tourism involves adult tourists sexually exploiting minors abroad, preying upon the most defenseless among us. It is a horrendous and shameful assault on the dignity and rights of children and is a form of violence and child abuse.

What All Nations Can Do

Education and awareness are the keys to the prevention of trafficking in persons, especially of children. The United States is asking governments to immediately expand and invigorate their anti-trafficking efforts.

Increased rescues of trafficking victims and prosecutions of traffickers are critically needed. People freed from

slavery must be treated as victims of crime, not criminals.

In collaboration with other countries to combat trafficking in persons, the U.S. seeks to build on the "Three Ps":

- Prevention of trafficking through such efforts as publicity of the threat and shared commitment to fight it;
- Protection of victims, including rescue and rehabilitation; and,
- Prosecution of perpetrators.

U.S. Efforts

Since 2001, the U.S. government has:

- Provided more than \$295 million to support anti-trafficking programs in 120 countries;
- Passed the PROTECT Act, which allows U.S. law enforcement to prosecute Americans who travel abroad to sexually abuse minors;
- Launched a domestic public awareness campaign to help rescue victims;
- Developed the successful Operation Predator initiative to identify, investigate, and arrest child sex criminals, including traffickers;
- Awarded a grant to World Vision to conduct a public awareness campaign to deter American tourists in foreign countries from engaging in commercial sexual exploitation of children;
- Secured a commitment from the travel and tourism industry to develop a Code of Conduct to Prevent the Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism.

International Cooperation

Because human trafficking is transnational, international partnerships are critical to win the fight against this modern-day slavery. Cooperation with other countries has contributed to the prosecution worldwide of nearly 8,000 perpetrators of trafficking crimes, resulting in more than 2,800 convictions in 2003.

The State Department is working extensively with other governments on action plans for prevention, protection of victims, and prosecution.

Modern-day slavery and its demand must be stopped. This is not a victimless or harmless crime, and governments should engage the public in a campaign to help expose and end this tragic exploitation of human beings.

U.S. PLANS TO PROMOTE DEMOCRACY IN THE UNITED NATIONS

This is a U.S. priority for the 59th U.N. General Assembly

TO PROMOTE DEMOCRACY IN THE UNITED NATIONS

"Lasting peace is gained as justice and democracy advance."

-- President George W. Bush, November 19, 2003

"When the United Nations can truly call itself a community of democracies, the Charter's noble ideals of protecting human rights and promoting 'social progress in larger freedoms' will have been brought much closer. When the founders of the United Nations met in San Francisco more than half a century ago, they knew that no foundation of peace would be sturdier than democratic government."

-- U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, June 27, 2000

A Democracy Caucus

Democratic nations share a common commitment to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms. The United States believes that democratic nations must work more closely together in order to help the United Nations live up to its founding principles. Through the formation of a Democracy Caucus at the United Nations -- a network of democratic nations working together -- the U.S. can advance the work of the U.N. in areas such as human rights, good governance, and the rule of law.

A Democracy Caucus is not intended to supplant long-standing regional or other groupings, but rather to provide an added mechanism for like-minded democratic nations to cooperate. It will serve as a supplementary network that countries use to cooperate on resolutions and alternatives.

In the Warsaw Declaration of June 27, 2000, more than 100 nations acknowledged the interdependence between peace, development, human rights, and democracy. This Community of Democracies, whose members meet standards set out in the Warsaw Declaration, has formed the basis of a Democracy Caucus in the U.N.

By advancing democracy, the caucus will in turn advance the U.N.'s basic aims of preserving peace, expanding economic development, and securing human rights. The Democracy Caucus is essential to creating an international environment in which democracy can flourish. The United States will work with other nations based on the idea that reinforcing democratic institutions should be the goal of every U.N. program.

Cooperation on U.N. Resolutions

U.N. resolutions must better reflect internationally accepted human rights standards and democratic principles. A Democracy Caucus can collaborate in drafting, introducing, and supporting the most vital human rights resolutions. Working together, democracies can help advance rule of law norms internationally and can better establish human rights standards.

Increased Democratic Participation

The United States hopes to work with a Democracy Caucus to ensure that democratic nations are encouraged to become strong and active participants in U.N. programs, such as the United Nations Development Program, and other U.N. bodies such as the Commission on Human Rights, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Labour Office (ILO), and other U.N. programs that contribute to the rule of law and basic freedoms.

Please Note: Most texts and transcripts mentioned in the U.S. Mission Daily Bulletin are available via our homepage www.usmission.ch. Select "Washington File" from the drop-down menu under "News."